

REMARKS

Re-examination and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority and for indicating that all of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received. Applicants also thank the Examiner for indicating that the submitted drawings are accepted.

Claims 5-7, 12, 18, 20, 21, 28-31 and 35 are objected to by the Examiner. However, the Examiner indicated that these claims would be allowable if they are amended to be placed into independent form. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that these claims contain allowable subject matter. In this regard, as will be discussed below, Applicants amend claim 1 to include substantially all the subject matter of dependent objected claim 5, and also amends the other independent claims in the application in a similar manner. Thus, Applicants refrain from placing claims 6, 7, 12, 18, 20, 21, 28-31 and 35 into independent form at the present time, but expressly reserve the right to do so at a later time.

Applicants note that the Office Action Summary sheet indicates that claim 37 is rejected. However, the ground for the rejection of claim 37 is not indicated in the Detailed Action portion of the Office Action. As claim 37 is an independent claim, Applicants are unsure as to what rejection has been applied against this claim, and respectfully requests clarification in the next official communication.

Claims 1-4, 8, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22-24 and 32-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese document 3261359 to TAMASHIMA et al.

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Claims 9-11, 13, 15, and 25-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of various prior art combinations. By the current amendment, Applicants amend independent claims 1, 26, 27, 32, 36 and 37 to include the subject matter of objected claim 5. In this regard, it is noted that independent claims 32 and 36 are further revised to more closely correspond to amended claim 1, while claims 33-35 are amended to be consistent with the revisions made to independent claim 32.

In view of the revisions to the independent claims to include substantially all the subject matter of object claim 5, Applicants submit that all the pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request such an indication by the Examiner. Further, Applicants submit that in view of the nature of the amendment, it is not necessary to address the various prior art rejections made by the Examiner. In this regard, the amendment of the claims to include the subject matter of objected claim 5 should not be taken as an acquiescence of the appropriateness of the rejection, but as a desire to advance the present application to issue.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.


Should the Commissioner determine that an extension of time is required in order to render this response timely and/or complete, a formal request for an extension of time,

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under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a), is herewith made in an amount equal to the time period required to render this response timely and/or complete. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required extension of time fee under 37 C.F.R. §1.17 to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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